

**Manuel and Maxine Lerman**  
**25 Sass Drive**  
**Manchester, CT 06042**  
[mberman1@cox.net](mailto:mberman1@cox.net)

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To Whom it May Concern:

Our names are Manuel and Maxine Lerman and we are from Manchester. We are testifying on the Governor's proposed budget H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 that unfortunately does not include critical funding for our safety net providers and their employees.

After decades of underfunding, Connecticut's direct support providers are in crisis mode because the effects of the pandemic have impacted their ability to attract and retain direct care workers and other employees. This staff is critically important to the safety and well-being of many of Connecticut's residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), including my own family.

Our son Elliot is currently in a group home supported by FAVARH and has day program supports from MARC, Inc. of Manchester, both excellent non-profit providers of services to people with IDD. We also have a combined twenty-two years of service to MARC's Board of Directors, part of that time serving as an officer. Elliot relies on support staff both for employment so that he can be a contributing member of the community and for assistance he needs for life skills in his residence. During the pandemic, he has been restricted in being able to participate in certain activities, sometimes due to lack of staff.

Without your help, our state's community service delivery system will continue to shrink and our loved ones will bear the brunt of this loss. The agencies providing services to our son are already experiencing the worst staffing crisis that service providers have ever seen, which has resulted in an inability to resume programs paused during COVID.

Now more than ever, we need to ensure that critically necessary funding of \$150 million is included in this year's budget for the state's non-profit providers who care for our loved ones on a daily basis. We urge your support and ask that you add this funding to the budget before this committee. My Child Matters!!!

Sincerely, and with great hope,  
Manuel and Maxine Lerman